

we ♥ the outdoors, we ♥ our city  
trails, we ♥ affordable living ♥ we  
♥ nice people, we ♥ our dog park, we  
♥ affordable housing, we ♥ our size,



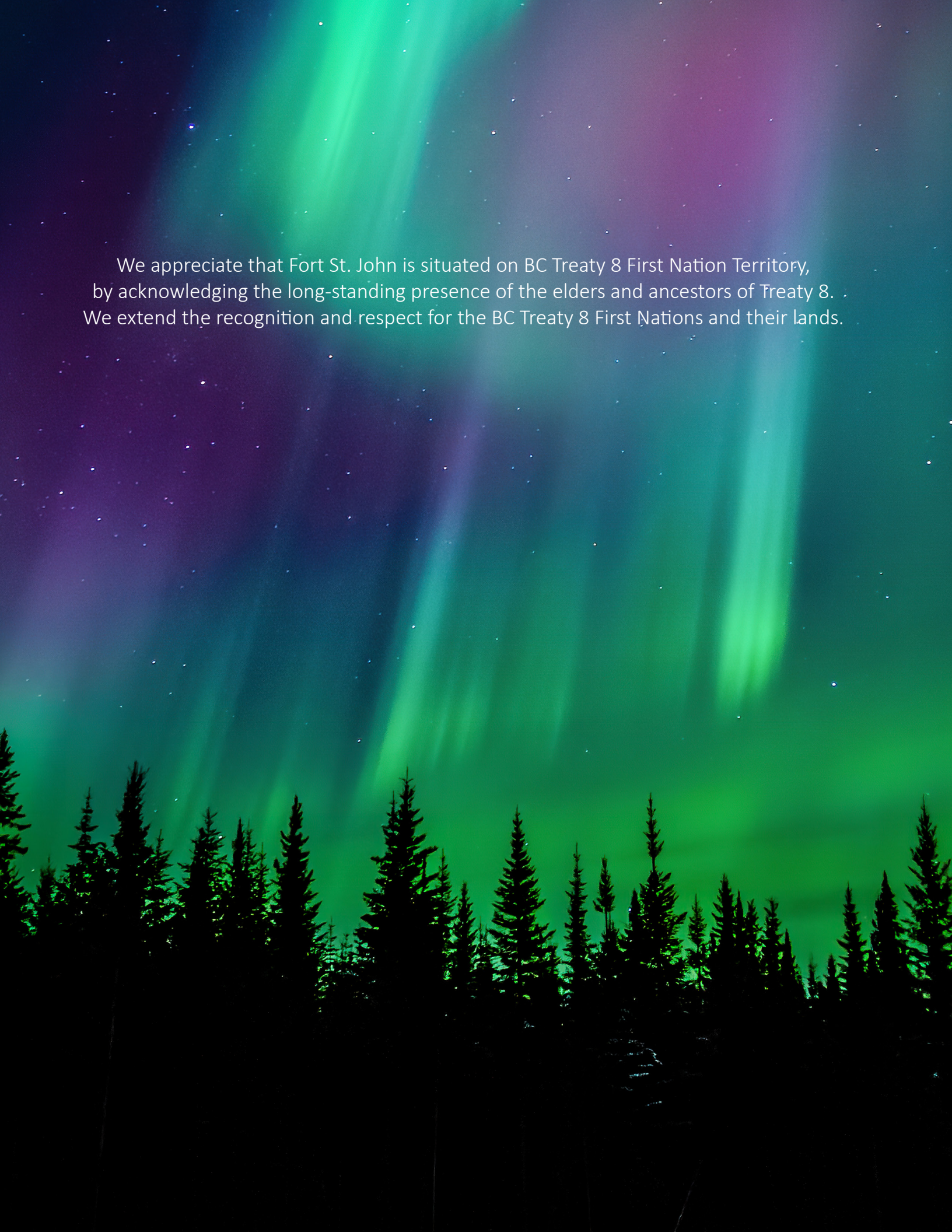
**WE ♥ FSJ**

building tomorrow together

2045 Official Community Plan

WHAT WE HEARD

we ♥ the northern lights, we ♥ quiet,  
we ♥ community, we ♥ public spaces  
we ♥ winter, we ♥ our neighbours,  
we ♥ community events, we ♥ our  
pump track, we ♥ good wages, we ♥  
our spray park, we ♥ family fun,  
we ♥ parks, we ♥ 100 street, we ♥  
our pool, we ♥ supporting local.

A photograph of the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) in a dark night sky. The aurora appears as vibrant green and blue streaks and curtains of light. Below the sky, the dark silhouettes of a dense evergreen forest are visible against the glowing light. The overall scene is serene and majestic.

We appreciate that Fort St. John is situated on BC Treaty 8 First Nation Territory, by acknowledging the long-standing presence of the elders and ancestors of Treaty 8. We extend the recognition and respect for the BC Treaty 8 First Nations and their lands.

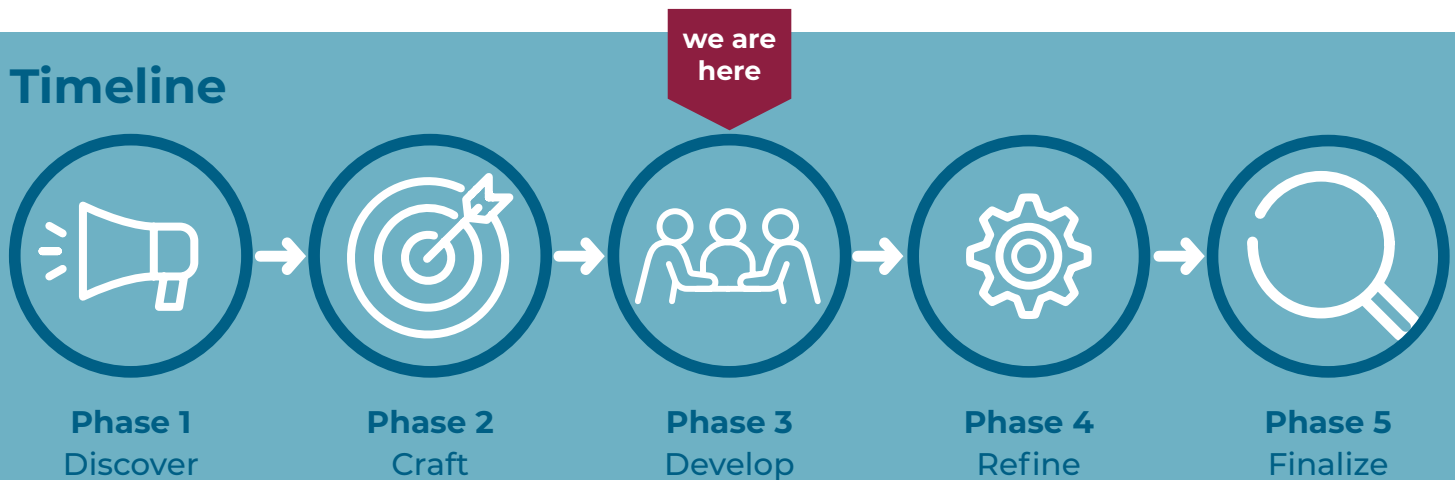
## About the Fort St. John OCP

The Official Community Plan (OCP) is a strategic plan for Fort St. John's long-term growth and development, informed by the community's vision and values. Your input helps shape key parts of our City, such as economic development, transportation, municipal services and amenities, and housing.

## Why is the City updating our OCP?

The province now requires local governments to update their Official Community Plan every five years and plan for anticipated housing need in 20 years. Fort St. John's community plan was last updated in 2017. Now is an excellent opportunity to review the OCP to ensure that it addresses the priorities and needs of our growing community.

### Timeline



## Phase 1 : Discover **FALL 2024**

Establish project foundations and build community awareness.

## Phase 2: Craft **WINTER 2025**

Define our community's goals, values, and future direction.

## Phase 3: Develop **← WE ARE HERE**

Draft policies and strategies based on community feedback.

## Phase 4: Refine **SUMMER 2025**

Review and refine draft policies with our community.

## Phase 5: Finalize **FALL 2025**

Finalize and adopt the OCP.



## Tools for public engagement

→ Social media

- City of Fort St. John Website

➔ City of Fort St. John Let's Talk Microsite

➔ Public Survey

→ Postcards

→ Coffee sleeve campaign

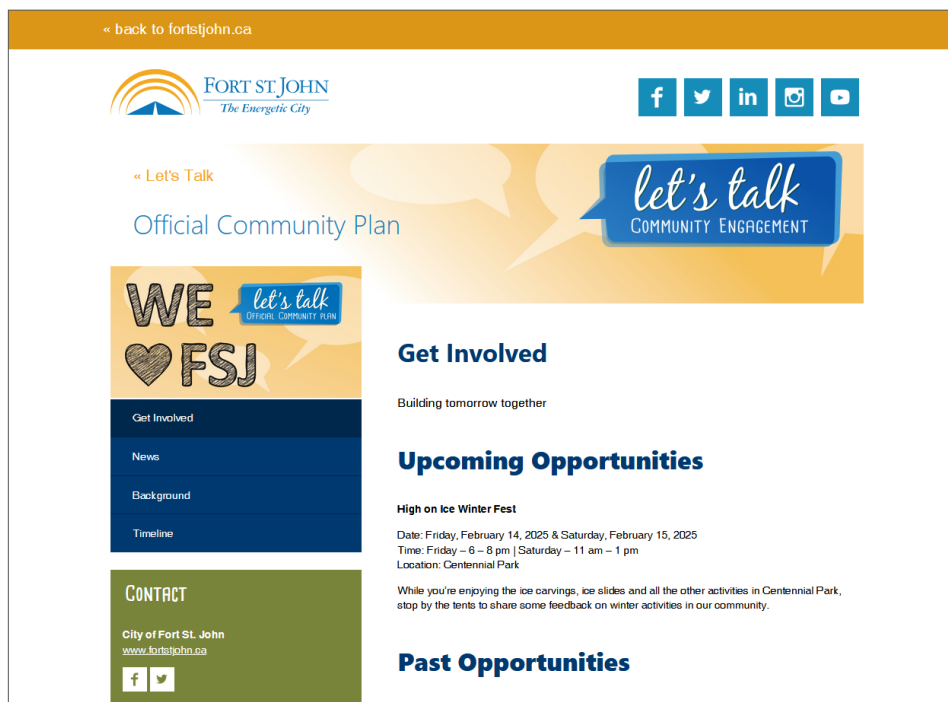
➔ Letters to all First Nation and Métis communities

## BROAD PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Along with promoting the survey through digital platforms and printed materials, we engaged directly with the community by hosting and attending events, creating opportunities for in-person discussions with citizens and staff. These efforts included:

- City held Public Open Houses
- Seniors Engagement
- On-site visits to various Community Partners
- Co-hosted a World Cafe engagement event with the Chamber of Commerce
- City hosted a World Cafe engagement event with Arts & Culture, Health Care and various Community Partners





## Let's Talk Microsite

A dedicated web page for the Fort St. John Official Community Plan was launched in Fall 2024 to share key information about the project. This page offers the community easy access to the latest updates on the OCP's progress, including news, background details, timelines, and both upcoming and past engagement opportunities. The site is available here: [letstalk.fortstjohn.ca](http://letstalk.fortstjohn.ca)

## Letters to all First Nation and Métis communities

We sent letters to all First Nation and Métis communities within the region to inform them of the OCP update process and invite their input. Several communities have responded, and staff have been facilitating meetings and will continue to do so throughout the OCP process.

## Public Survey

An online public survey was launched and remained open from mid-November 2024 to mid-January 2025, inviting residents to share what they appreciate about Fort St. John. The second public survey is now available on the Let's Talk OCP Microsite.



## OCP Vision Statement

We asked the public if they liked, disliked or wanted to modify our current OCP vision statement. Generally we heard that people like our existing vision statement, but would like the future tense changed to current tense. Here is what they said:

Will be  
or is?

Fort St  
flourishing  
work, live and p  
resources nece  
with all  
for h

**"Fort St. John will be a flourishing  
nature lives, businesses prosper, far  
diversity is celebrat**

Will continue  
to be...

I kno  
work  
ma

*Data source: Open Houses, World Cafes with business community and non-profit organizations, seniors engagement.*



John will be a vibrant,  
community where you can  
play, raise your family with all the  
necessary for health and prosperity  
the resources necessary  
health and prosperity

Change tense

**community where  
families are active and  
ed"**

Use  
Oxford  
commas

ow we can keep  
king together to  
ke a great plan

Please keep the  
diversity piece if this  
is updated



# Craft and Discover Phase Public Engagement

| Event                                     | Date                 | People        |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Moose FM Block Party                      | Sept 7, 2024         | 350+          |
| Public Survey #1                          | Mid-Nov to Mid-Jan   | 126           |
| Sunday Free Skates                        | Nov 24 & Dec 8, 2024 | 125           |
| Santa Claus Parade                        | Dec 16, 2024         | 346+          |
| Seniors Engagement                        | Jan 23, 2025         | 48            |
| World Cafes                               | Feb 5, 2025          | 55            |
| Open Houses                               | Feb 6 & 7, 2025      | 16            |
| High on Ice Winter Festival               | Feb 14 & 15, 2025    | 35            |
| <b>Total of people engaged (8 events)</b> |                      | <b>1,101+</b> |



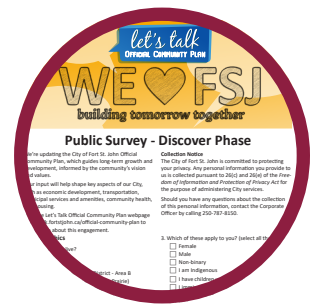
Sticky note board



Community theme board



Winter City Activity



Public Survey



Coffee sleeves



OCP postcards



Community Check-in sheets



Thought jots



# What people ♥ about FSJ

- Employment opportunities
- Friendly, family-oriented community
- Rural life and access to nature
- Cost of living
- Convenience

*I like that you can earn a good wage in FSJ and that housing prices are reasonable, making it easier to get ahead. I also like that there are a variety of activities and recreation opportunities for individuals and families to participate in.*

# What people 💔 about FSJ

- Healthcare
- Local economy
- Cost of living
- Community safety
- Getting around the City
- City infrastructure & services

*Lack of mental health resources and support (I work for northern health)  
No psych ward or rehab centres Drug abuse  
Homelessness Lack of activities and centres for children and young teens We don't have a proper pool facility No proper indoor courts for sports like basketball/volleyball for drop in or club leagues.*



## Enhancing Policy

Aligning Policy with  
What We Heard

### Arts & Culture

- Should be visible across the City
- Collaboration with and support of Arts & Culture community
- Recognize arts and culture as a community pillar
- Celebration of cultural diversity in northeast BC

### Housing

- Support for providing housing choice
- Lack of support for parking reductions in the downtown area
- Importance of accessible housing options
- Collaboration with housing providers to get more affordable housing units built
- More opportunities for the development community to provide feedback on housing policy

### Economic Development

- Visual improvements needed at City entrances
- Seek social and economic benefits from energy sector
- Expand tourism to include workers and sports + events tourism, and attract Alaska Hwy travellers
- Include more policy for agriculture, commercial businesses, and supporting local businesses
- Collaborate with regional Indigenous communities on economic development projects

## Healthcare

- Prioritize advocacy on behalf of citizens to the Province
- Recruitment should include allied healthcare professionals
- Promotion and support of Northern Lights College's accelerated nursing program
- General lack of support for financial incentives for healthcare workers unless carefully crafted

## Parks & Recreation

- Universal design principals for park upgrades and access
- Improve trail connections between City and Peace River Regional District
- Family-friendly recreation services and no or low-cost activities
- More indoor recreation space and activities
- Central hub for all things FSJ
- Positive feedback about Kin Park upgrades
- Development of Winter City Strategy

Data source: *Open Houses, World Cafes with business community and non-profit organizations, seniors engagement. Since the previous OCP update in 2017, many key strategic and master plans have been updated or developed and will need to be incorporated into OCP content. These include:*

- Community Arts and Culture Strategy (2023)
- Fort St. John's Economic Development Strategy (2023)
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2023 Update
- Housing Needs Report 2024 Update

Staff drafted goals, objectives, and strategies based on the above noted plans, while also considering what was heard during the Develop Phase. We also included Healthcare, given that this was a major concern for community members at every engagement event.

# Next Steps

## Phase 3: Develop

Staff will take the feedback we receive from the Fort St. John Tradeshow and second public survey and begin working on the draft OCP. Our next major milestone for this project is the Canada Day Celebrations on July 1 2025, where staff will present the full draft OCP for public review and input.

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trails, we ♥ affordable living ♥ we  
♥ nice people, we ♥ our dog park, we  
♥ affordable housing, we ♥ our size,  
we ♥ a convenient lifestyle, we ♥  
short commutes, we ♥ camping,  
we ♥ helpful people, we ♥ family,  
we ♥ the northern lights, we ♥ quiet,  
we ♥ community, we ♥ public spaces  
we ♥ winter, we ♥ our neighbours,  
we ♥ community events, we ♥ our  
pump track, we ♥ good wages, we ♥  
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